

Serial No. 10/728,879

Attorney Docket No. 113708.127 US2

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1-13 (Canceled)

14. (Amended) A method of utilizing an intellectual property thesaurus to search a collection of intellectual property documents, the method comprising:

(a) designating a field of search ~~based on~~including selection of at least one of a plurality of classifications of an intellectual property classification system, wherein the field of search includes plural intellectual property documents;

(b) generating a list of words found in the content of the plural intellectual property information documents classified in the field of search designated in said designating step (a);

(c) entering search criteria utilizing keywords that formulate a search query, wherein the keywords can be different from the words in the list of words; and

(d) determining searchable elements related to select keywords in the search criteria based on of step (c) by locating words in the list of words generated in said generating step (b) that are synonyms of the select keywords; and

(e) executing, in a computer, the search query to search the content of the intellectual property documents using the select keywords and the synonyms of the select keywords, and receiving results returned from executing the search query.

15. (Original) The method of utilizing an intellectual property thesaurus as recited in claim 14, wherein said generating step (b) further comprises the step of determining a frequency of occurrence of each listed word found in the intellectual property information associated with the field of search.

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16. (Currently amended) The method of utilizing an intellectual property thesaurus as recited in claim 15, further comprising the step of:

(e) displaying, in the form of a word-frequency list, the list of words found in the intellectual property information classified in the field of search, wherein each listed word is associated with a corresponding frequency of occurrence of the listed word.

17. (Currently amended) The method of utilizing an intellectual property thesaurus as recited in claim 16, wherein said displaying step (e) comprises simultaneous display of the search criteria during operation of said entering step (e) and the display of the word-frequency list.

18. (Currently amended) The method of utilizing an intellectual property thesaurus as recited in claim 14, ~~wherein said entering step (e) comprises entering keywords that formulate a search query; and wherein said determining step (d) further comprises:~~

~~—determining searchable elements related to select keywords in the search query by locating words on the list generated in said generating step (b) that are synonyms of select keywords in the search query; and~~

storing the synonyms thus determined in an accrued synonym list corresponding to the select keywords in the search query.

19. (Currently amended) The method of utilizing an intellectual property thesaurus as recited in ~~claim 18~~claim 14, wherein said determining step (d) is automatically performed to determine synonyms for keywords in the search query.

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20. (Currently amended) The method of utilizing an intellectual property thesaurus as recited in ~~claim 18~~claim 14, wherein said entering step (c) further comprises the step of automatically incorporating into the search criteria synonyms from the accrued synonym list.

21. (Original) The method of utilizing an intellectual property thesaurus as recited in claim 17, further comprising the step of:

(f) submitting the search criteria as a search query to the database.

22. (Original) The method of utilizing an intellectual property thesaurus as recited in claim 21, wherein said submitting step (f) includes transmission of the search query to a remote database over the Internet.

23. (Currently amended) In a search system for use in searching for intellectual property ~~information documents~~, the improvement comprising an article of manufacture having stored thereon an executable program operative to effectuate searching for intellectual property ~~information documents~~ in connection with the search system, wherein the executable program is executed to perform the steps of:

(a) designating a source grouping comprising ~~at least one document~~plural ~~having intellectual property information documents~~;

(b) generating a list of words found in the ~~at least one~~content of the plural ~~document in the intellectual property information documents~~ within the source grouping designated in said designating step (a);

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(c) entering search criteria utilizing keywords that formulate a search query, wherein the keywords can be different from the words in the list of words;

(d) determining searchable elements related to select keywords in the search criteria of step (a) by locating words in the list of words generated in step (b) that are synonyms of the select keywords; and

(e) executing the search query using to search the content of the plural documents using the select keywords and the synonyms of the select keywords, and receiving results returned from executing the search query and providing at least a portion of the elements in the list for later use as search criteria.

24. (Canceled) The article of manufacture of claim 23, wherein the executable program is executed to perform the additional steps of

(c) formulating search criteria utilizing input keywords; and

(d) determining searchable elements related to the input keywords in the search criteria based on the list of words generated in said generating step (b).

25. (Canceled) The article of manufacture of claim 24, wherein said determining step (d) comprises:

determining searchable elements related to select keywords in the search criteria by locating words on the list generated in said generating step (b) that are synonyms of select keywords in the search criteria.

26. (Currently amended) The article of manufacture of ~~claim 25~~claim 23, wherein said designating step (a) further comprises:

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receiving input signals from a user containing a selection of at least one of a plurality of classifications of an intellectual property classification system; and

designating the source grouping as a field of search based on the input selection from the user.

27. (Original) The article of manufacture of claim 26, wherein the classification system is the system used by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office for classification of patents, and wherein the input signals contain a selection of a plurality of classes and subclasses that form the source grouping.

28. (Currently amended) The article of manufacture of ~~claim 25~~claim 23, wherein the source grouping includes selected plural intellectual property information documents stored in a database, and wherein said generating step (b) includes the step of retrieving the selected intellectual property ~~information documents~~ from the database and compiling the list of words found in the retrieved intellectual property information.

29. (Currently amended) The article of manufacture of ~~claim 25~~claim 23, wherein said ~~formulating~~entering step (c) automatically adds to the search criteria the synonyms determined in said determining step (d) search criteria utilizing input keywords.

30. (Currently amended) The article of manufacture of claim 29, wherein the executable program further comprises the step of:

outputting the search criteria to a user interface; and

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accessing at least one remote database unit for intellectual property
information documents corresponding to the search criteria.

31. (Original) The article of manufacture of claim 30, wherein said outputting step further comprises the step of simultaneously displaying a word-frequency list and the search criteria, wherein the word-frequency list is a list of all the words appearing in the source grouping, together with the frequency of occurrence in the source grouping.